Default in payment of telephone bills

2635. SHRI K.M. KHAN:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of telephone subscribers have defaulted in payment of telephone bills to MTNL & BSNL;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the outstanding dues which are to be recovered from the defaulters as on 31st December, 2001 Category-wise;

(d) whether MTNL/BSNL have written off arrears of telephone bills in certain cases;

(e) if so, the number of such cases where arrears were written off; and the amount written off; and

(f) the guidelines, if any, for writing off the arrears?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Out of all the subscribers billed in a year, less than about 3% normally default on payment. Between 1.4.2001 and 31.12.2001, out of 13.03 crores bills issued by BSNL to 2.8 crore subscribers, default in payment occurred only in about 2.8% cases. The Circle-wise break up of cases attracting disconnection during 1.4.2001 to 31.12.2001 is given in Statement (*See* below).

(c) Category-wise outstanding dues for BSNL & MTNL as on 31.12.2001 is as under:

(Rupees in Crores)

State Government	Cental Government Departments	Defence Departments	Private Parties	Total
221	66	24	4555	4866

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. In a few cases the arrears have been written off. The amount written off from April to December 2001 is Rs. 6.36 crore.

(f) The chief criterion for the write off dues is that they are found to be irrecoverable. These are cases where:

1. Very petty amounts are outstanding in which pursuit would be uneconomical through lawsuits.
2. Whereabouts of subscribers are not known or the subscribers are proved to be insolvent.
3. Closure of the subscriber's firms or concerns have occured.

Statement

Circle-wise break up of cases attracting disconnection during 1.4.2001 to 31.12.2001

Circle	Number of cases
Andaman & Nicobar	2225
Andhra Pradesh	393206
Assam	116624
Bihar	73134
Gujarat	208129
Haryana	128672
Himachal Pradesh	28553
Jammu & Kashmir	43417
Jharkhand	5891
Karnataka	330478
Kerala	339394

Circle	Number of cases
Madhya Pradesh	148869
Maharashtra	188766
North East-I	11360
North East-II	7460
Orissa	102882
Punjab	171582
Rajasthan	179797
Tamil Nadu	304358
Uttar Pradesh (East)	304836
Utter Pradesh (West)	178758
West Bengal	69140
Calcutta	228381
Chennai	11965
Chhattisgarh	26320
Uttaranchal	45904

Setting up of a Telecom Financing Corporation

†2636. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Working Group on the Tenth Plan has suggested that Government should consider setting up of a Telecom Financing Corporation to ensure cheaper financial assistance for the equipment manufacturers and operators;

(b) if so, whether the Group has also recommended a ten year tax holiday to the existing and new telecom equipment manufacturers;

(c) whether Government have considered the suggestions made in the Report; and

(d) if so, by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.